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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y ((TAGS LINE/CLASSIFIED BY))

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#)
SUBJECT: RUSSIAN NATIONALIST GOES TO NATO: OFFERS
CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH

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Classified by Amb. William J. Burns; Reasons: 1.4(b/d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Russia's charismatic nationalist politician, Dmitriy Rogozin, confirmed press reports that he will be appointed the GOR's next Ambassador to NATO and expects to arrive in Brussels by late November. Claiming that his appointment is a Putin initiative, Rogozin candidly described exchanging life in the political wilderness for what he expects to be a larger-than-normal ambassadorial writ. At pains to counter his record of lambasting NATO and his previous controversial service representing Russia at the Parliamentary Council of Europe, Rogozin emphasized a "constructive and responsible" approach and acknowledged Russia's share of blame in preventing the NRC from becoming more dynamic. Some experts depict Rogozin's possible appointment as a GOR sign of displeasure with NATO. Rogozin is a talented, if profoundly amoral, politician, whose behavior in Brussels will be calibrated closely to the signals that he receives from the Kremlin. Biographic details are provided. End Summary

Mr. Rogozin Goes to Brussels

[1](#)2. (C) In an October 26 meeting, Duma member Dmitriy Rogozin confirmed press reports that he was soon to be tapped as Russia's next Ambassador to NATO, in line with his previous hints that the Kremlin would offer him an important foreign policy posting (ref a). While noting that bureaucratic formalities remained and formal congratulations were premature, Rogozin stressed that his appointment was a Putin initiative and he expected to be in Brussels by the end of November. Rogozin described his position as an "Ambassador-Plus" or "super ambassadorship," with direct lines of communication to the Kremlin and little interference from the MFA bureaucracy. His writ would extend as far as necessary to drive home Russian points on NATO relations, and Rogozin suggested that he would reach out to U.S. leaders and European parliamentarians from his new diplomatic perch. Despite his political problems, Rogozin insisted that his personal rapport with Putin had always been good.

Why Rogozin, Why Brussels?

[1](#)3. (C) Rogozin was candid about the reasons driving his

appointment. Foremost, he noted, was the geographical distance between Brussels and Moscow, during a sensitive political transition, when the Kremlin sought to eliminate all electoral surprises. Acknowledging the "zero tolerance" that Putin's inner circle had for his popular brand of Great Russian nationalism, Rogozin said it was clear that he had no immediate political future in this country. Rogozin pointed to a GOR-campaign to portray him as a xenophobe-zealot (and "who is the zealot now?" Rogozin crowed), to the invitation (that could not be refused) to merge his Rodina party into the bureaucratic and ultimately moribund Just Russia political coalition (ref b), and to the Central Election Commission's ruling against the registration of Rogozin's follow-on political movement, "Great Russia," as proof that Russian electoral politics were off-limits. Rogozin added that a Kremlin offer of the governorship of Voronezh was too small a political palette to be tempting.

14. (C) Despite media commentary that has focused on Rogozin's bad boy reputation while representing Russia at the Parliamentary Council of Europe (PACE) in 1999-2001, Rogozin claimed that Putin viewed him as a problem solver, as someone who had successfully navigated the negotiations over the Kaliningrad transit regime, and as a vigorous and articulate spokesman, who could be counted upon to defend Russian national interests on missile defense, CFE, and Kosovo. In contrast to incumbent Ambassador Totskiy, Rogozin described himself as a "man of Europe," steeped in European institutions, and conversant in English, French, and Italian.

Based on his son's participation in a NATO information program, Rogozin said he was impressed with the NATO public relations machinery and argued that among his priorities was creating a constituency for NATO in Russia, perhaps through the establishment of a NATO Institute. Ridding the Russian NATO mission of deadwood was another priority, and Rogozin mused about the need to "clean up the cadre."

Constructive and Responsible Approach Promised

15. (C) At several junctures, Rogozin reiterated his intent to work responsibly and constructively within NATO to enhance

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the work of the NATO-Russia Council and to resolve policy disputes over European security architecture and missile defense. He clarified that earlier public statements to the effect that NATO was "dead" were really a misinterpretation of his position that expansion would weaken the ideological coherence and ultimate effectiveness of the organization (See paragraph 10 for samples of Rogozin's statements on NATO). NATO was not an enemy, but a neighbor, and Rogozin said he viewed his appointment as an opportunity to strengthen relations; his appointment was not a Trojan horse.

16. (C) Rogozin was not up to speed on the NATO agenda, but made the following general policy points:

-- Putin's offer to cooperate in Qabala should not be underestimated or taken for granted. It was made over the objections of senior advisers, and had incurred some criticism. The West needed to understand that this was a strategic offer.

-- Russia's disagreement on Kosovo was principled, and the potential for a unilateral declaration of independence to cause a serious setback in relations was real.

-- Afghanistan was an area of clear overlapping strategic interests. Narcotics were poisoning Russian youth, corrupting border guard and law enforcement organs, and financing the resurgence of the Taliban. More should be done in NATO-Russia channels.

-- Putin was disappointed by the absence of "real"

cooperation at NATO, with Rogozin stating that the Russians deserved the lion's share of the blame for the stalemate.

Dmitriy Rogozin: Frustrated Cynic

17. (C) Experts believe that Rogozin is sure to cause a stir when he arrives in Brussels. While all agree that he will follow orders from the Kremlin, some argue that any instructions he receives that are anti-NATO in character will be carried out with much enthusiasm. Rogozin also enjoys living the high life, they said, and will take full advantage of Brussels in this regard.

18. (C) Konstantin Eggert, Editor-in-Chief of the BBC in Moscow, studied with Rogozin at MGU. He characterized Rogozin as a cynic who is frustrated by his inability to play a major role in Russian politics. He called Rogozin's appointment as Ambassador to NATO a "silly gesture designed to show NATO what Russia thinks of it." Vyacheslav Nikonov, President of the Unity in the Name of Russian Foundation, agreed, telling the newspaper Kommersant, "appointing someone who has always disliked NATO is a sign that Russian authorities are highly displeased with the Alliance's policies." On a positive note, Eggert said that Rogozin truly understands Russian politics and will have access to Kremlin decision-makers.

Comment

19. (C) Rogozin is one of Russia's most charismatic and ambitious politicians, whose personal charm is belied by his willingness to join arms with unreconstructed racists, chauvinists and anti-Semites in pursuit of electoral gain. While claiming that he has never betrayed his political principles, Rogozin strikes us as unlikely to be bound by any code. Instead, his policy positions and his personal demeanor in Brussels will be carefully calibrated to reflect the political winds blowing from the Kremlin. If given the writ, Rogozin can be an effective diplomat and negotiator; if told to stymie policy, he will be a formidable foe.

Biographic Information

10. (U) Dmitriy Olegovich Rogozin. Born, December 21, 1963, Moscow.

Education

- 1986 -- Graduated from Moscow State University, Journalism faculty.

- 1988 -- Graduated from Marxism-Leninism University, Economic faculty. Diploma: "The U.S. Psychological War against Cuba." Supported preservation of the Soviet Union.

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- 1999 -- Received Doctorate from Moscow State University. Doctoral thesis: "Problems of Russia's National Security on the Edge of the 21st Century."

Professional Experience

- 1992 -- Co-founded People's Patriotic Movement "Congress of Russian Societies."

- 03/1997 -- Elected to Duma, joined "People's Deputy Group." Member of Commission on the Impeachment of President Yeltsin.

- 1998 -- Joined Yuriy Luzhkov's "Fatherland" Party.

- 1999 -- Left "Fatherland" Party. Reelected to Duma, and elected Chairman of the Duma International Affairs Committee. Head of Parliamentary Delegation to PACE.
- 2002-2003 -- Designated Special Presidential Envoy to the Parliamentary Council of Europe on the Issues Related to the Settlement of the Kaliningrad Problem and other Russia-EU problems.
- 10/2003 -- Elected Co-Chairman of the Supreme Council of the "Rodina" Party.
- 12/2003 -- Reelected to Duma, appointed Deputy Duma Speaker.
- 03/2004 -- Became Chairman of "Rodina" Faction.
- 2006 -- Resigned from Head of Faction, and later resigned from Party Chairman post.
- 2007 -- Co-founded "Great Russia" Party.

Rogozin is married. He and his current wife are expecting their first child. He has a grown son and grandson, with a granddaughter on the way, from a previous marriage.

 Statements on NATO

¶11. (U) Among Rogozin's statements on NATO are the following:

- "It won't be NATO if Russia joins" -- February 20, 2001;
- "Relations between NATO and Russia should be considered as relations between two alliances, as allies" -- January 14, 2002;
- "NATO has been transformed into some sort of "loose" bloc in which the United States has less and less consideration of other members" -- May 13, 2003;
- (Regarding NATO expansion) "The closer the NATO bases, the easier to hit them. It is more a military issue than a political one. Our military will be able to take care of that" -- December 12, 2003;
- "This NATO enlargement represents a real threat to the state security and to the security of the President's home town. They (NATO) should realize, "friendship is friendship, but keep your powder separate" -- March 29, 2004;
- "NATO is an organization where U.S. satellites can prove their loyalty" -- April 2, 2004;
- "NATO, EU, USA - are the real players of modern history, and Russia is forced to interact with them, trying to protect its own interests. The main principle of modern policy is "first come, first serve," and we should remember it, bearing in mind that Russia's only allies are its Navy, Army, and Air Force" -- April 7, 2004;
- "NATO is a dying organization" -- February 10, 2006.